

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the rejections contained in the Office Action of September 7, 2004 is respectfully requested.

The Examiner objected to the specification due to an informality. In order to address the Examiner's objection, and in order to make several additional editorial corrections, the entire specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised. As the revisions are quite extensive, the amendments to the specification and abstract have been incorporated into the attached substitute specification and abstract. For the Examiner's benefit, a marked-up copy of the specification indicating the changes made thereto is also enclosed. No new matter has been added by the revisions, and entry of the substitute specification is thus respectfully requested. In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's objection to the specification has been overcome.

The Examiner objected to elected claims 1-5 due to various informalities. In order to address the informalities cited by the Examiner, and in order to place the original claims in a preferred form, the original claims, including elected claims 1-5 and non-elected claims 6-10, have now been cancelled and replaced with new claims 11-26. All of the new claims read on the elected invention, and have been drafted so as to fully comply with all of the requirements of 35 USC § 112. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner's objections to the original claims have been overcome.

The Examiner rejected original elected claims 1-5 as being anticipated by the JP '167 reference (JP 2000-88167) or, alternatively, as being unpatentable over the JP '167 reference. However, as indicated above, the original claims have been cancelled and replaced with new claims 11-26. For the reasons discussed below, it is respectfully submitted that the new claims are clearly patentable over the prior art of record.

As explained on page 1 of the specification, conventional fuel rails experience problems due to leakage from the connections between the longitudinal fuel passage within the conduit and adjoining branch pipes. The present invention has been developed to address these problems, and is generally directed to an elongated conduit having a longitudinal fuel passage therein, and having

a plurality of holes. As recited in both new independent claim 11 and new independent claim 20, an inner collar and an outer collar are provided at each of the holes, and each of the inner collar and the outer collar at each of the holes is *integral* with a wall of the conduit so as to have a *one-piece construction with the wall of the conduit* such that the inner collar and the outer collar at each of the holes are formed *simultaneously* with each respective hole by drilling. A plurality of branch pipes are then fixed to the wall at the holes by inserting a basal end of each of the branch pipes into a respective one of the holes.

As explained on page 3, lines 12-20 of the original specification, the arrangement described above provides several advantages. Firstly, the inner collar and the outer collar provide additional support for each of the branch pipes. Therefore, the connection between each of the branch pipes and the wall of the conduit can be strengthened, so that stress concentration at these connections can be lowered and cracks which cause leaks can be avoided or eliminated. Moreover, because each of the inner collar and the outer collar are *integral* with the wall of the conduit so as to have a *one-piece construction*, there is no need for forming an additional joint between each of the inner collar and the outer collar and the wall of the conduit. Therefore, a stress concentration point is eliminated, so as to further lower the occurrence of defects such as cracks. Furthermore, manufacture of the fuel rail can be simplified because each of the holes and the respective inner collar and outer collar can be formed by simply drilling through the wall of the conduit.

The JP '167 reference discloses a connecting structure for a branch pipe, in which a branch pipe 2 having a fitting 2-1, 2-2, or 2-3 at the end thereof is connected to a main pipe 1. Although Figures 2 through 5 illustrate an inner collar 1-2a at a hole 1-2, the JP '167 reference does not disclose or even suggest an *outer* collar at each of the holes, in which the outer collar at each of the holes is integral with a wall of the conduit so as to have a one-piece construction with the conduit. Thus, the JP' 167 reference also does not disclose or suggest that the inner collar and the outer collar can be formed simultaneously with each respective hole by drilling. In this regard, Figure 5 of the JP '167 reference appears to disclose an outer collar 2-3a or 2-3b. However, the outer collar illustrated in Figure 5 is clearly not integral with the wall of the conduit so as to have a one-piece construction, and instead appears to be welded to both the branch pipe 2 and the main pipe 1.

As explained above, the JP '167 reference does not disclose or even suggest an outer collar that is integral with the wall of the conduit so as to have a one-piece construction such that the inner collar and the outer collar at each of the holes are formed simultaneously with each respective hole by drilling. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated by the JP '167 reference to obtain the present invention as recited in new independent claims 11 and 20. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that new independent claims 11 and 20, and the claims that depend therefrom are clearly patentable over the prior art of record.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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